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Successful Proposal Preparation

Writing a Proposal that will Win the Contract

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Acquisition Planning and Compliance Section

Acquisition Division

Wyoming Small Business Conference

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Purpose

➤ *Participants*: Compete in the Federal Marketplace

- ❖ Learn your role (prime, subcontractor, protégé or team member)
- ❖ Win more jobs
- ❖ Perform them well and profitably

➤ *Agencies/Primes*: Develop additional sources

- ❖ Conduct business with outstanding contractors
- ❖ Implement Small Business (SB), Small-disadvantaged business (SDB), Women-owned business (WOB), Veteran-owned, HUBZone and other initiatives



Objectives

- Provide basics of Source Selection Process
 - ❖ “Best-Value” process (“Competitive-evaluated”)
- Get the "*Big Picture*"--Ask the right questions
- Learn about *Areas of Emphasis*
 - ❖ Grading Proposals
 - ❖ Making the Competitive Range
 - ❖ Performing well during Oral Discussions
 - ❖ Recent changes to the process



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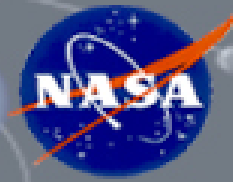
Workshop Outline



- Pre-RFP Activities
- Proposal Preparation Period
- Initial Evaluation/Scoring of Proposals
- Oral Discussions
- Final Proposal Revisions
- Final Evaluation



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Pre-RFP Agency/ Prime Contractor Activities

➤ Acquisition Strategy Issues

- ❖ **Goal:** Meet *minimum* agency/prime need, on time, at a reasonable cost
- ❖ **Steps Required:**
 - Identify *Mission Need*
 - Learn about *Make-Buy* decision
 - Learn about Govt. *Marketing Research* for effort
 - Develop *SOW, Specs, Standards*
 - Develop *Evaluation Criteria*
 - Develop *Request for Proposal* (RFP)
 - Apply criteria to proposals to make source selection



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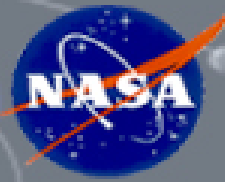
Obstacles

- Large/R&D Contracts Commonly Impacted by:
 - ❖ Changes in Program Requirements
 - ❖ Funding Constraints
 - ❖ Advances in Technology
 - ❖ Unrealistic Estimates
 - ❖ Defective or Ambiguous Specs
 - ❖ Competing priorities
- Challenges
 - ❖ **Govt./Prime** – Get the job done right
 - ❖ **Proposer**- Win the job and earn a profit



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The Players



➤ Source Selection Team

- ❖ Contracting Officer
- ❖ Cognizant Technical Official
- ❖ Team Members
- ❖ Program Manager
- ❖ Source Selection Official

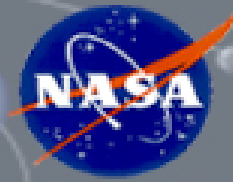
➤ Outside Influences

- ❖ Rulemakers - Agencies and Congress: Using Regulations and Laws (e.g., CICA)
- ❖ Arbiters - GAO, Courts and Boards: Handling Protests of Awards



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Agency/Prime Contractor- First Steps (cont.)



➤ Who Are These People?

- ❖ Qualified, experienced functional experts
- ❖ Balance of program expertise vs. independence
- ❖ No conflict of interest
- ❖ Very busy-not completely familiar with effort

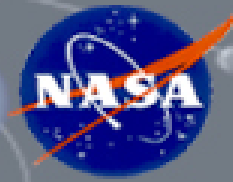
➤ Analyze your likely evaluators

- ❖ Cover all areas of their interest
- ❖ Don't assume they know:
 - Nature of effort
 - Merits of your approach
 - Your company's strong points
- ❖ Make it easy for them to locate proposal data



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Agency/Prime Contractor- First Steps



- Agency Must:
 - ❖ Decide *what to buy* and find *sources*
 - ❖ Use *acquisition planning* and *market surveys* (**FAR 7.102**)
 - ❖ Develop *drawings, technical documents, specs*, etc.
 - ❖ Not use unduly restrictive specifications
 - ❖ Go commercial when possible
- If Agency requests information, respond fully and promptly
 - ❖ Market survey requests
 - ❖ Letters of interest
 - ❖ Requests for additional information



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Agency/Prime Contractor First Steps (cont.)



➤ Market Research

- ❖ Understand the marketplace to maximize competition
- ❖ Look at Govt. databases
- ❖ Use Requests for Information

➤ Compile Source List

- ❖ Central Contractor Registration <http://www.ccr.gov//>
- ❖ Use office's bidders lists
- ❖ Advertise to trade associations, in the media, etc.
- ❖ Determine whether the job can be a SB set-aside



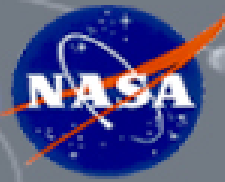
Developing Evaluation Factors

➤ Purpose of Factors

- ❖ Assess ability to meet contract requirements
- ❖ Determine relative merits of competing proposers

➤ Strategy for Developing Factors

- ❖ **FAR 15.605** guidance
 - Tailor factors for each acquisition
 - Include only those that will impact source selection
 - Price (or cost) and quality are always factors
 - *Note:* Agencies have great discretion in formulating factors and weightings



Types of Evaluation Factors

- Technical
- Management
- Cost or Price
- Other Factors
 - ❖ Financial Capability
 - ❖ Past Performance



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Developing the Rating System

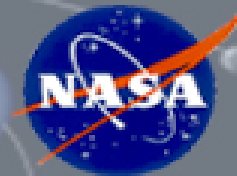
➤ Relative Weights

- ❖ Agency determines relative importance of factors and method
 - Fixed weights (e.g., 400 points for design, 350 points for management, 250 points for fab. and test)
 - Variable weights (e.g., "If technical proposals are relatively equal, cost becomes more important")
 - Priority or tradeoff analysis (e.g., decide if technical and management differences between proposers warrant price differential)
 - Go/No-Go (e.g., "If the product does not pass life test, the entire proposal is unacceptable")
 - Indeterminate weights (e.g., "The factors are listed in descending order of importance")

NOTE: Cost/price is frequently not weighted



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Developing the Scoring System

➤ General Considerations

- ❖ Method must be rational and applied in good faith
- ❖ Method must compare proposals to contract requirements/criteria and against each other

➤ Methods

- ❖ Colors, numerical, ranking, adjectival



Developing the Rating System (cont.)



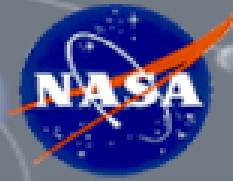
➤ Why Important:

- ❖ Gear your emphasis to heavily weighted items
- ❖ Determine which cost/price strategy is being used
- ❖ Put yourself in SSO's shoes- would you pick your company, given RFP tradeoffs?
- ❖ If you can't meet go-no criteria, NO BID
- ❖ If you aren't competitive, NO BID
- ❖ Agency can't select you if unacceptable in any significant area
 - Too expensive
 - Critical weakness
- ❖ If you don't score high enough, may be eliminated from competitive range
 - Don't assume you can get well later



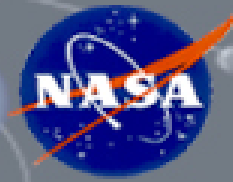
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Example 1- Technical Criterion and Factors (JPL)



➤ Design Concept (*Criterion T1*)

- ❖ The degree to which the proposed design concept will result in the development of hardware capable of meeting the technical requirements. Factors to be considered are as follows:
 - Overall Subsystem Design (*Factor*)
The proposed subsystem design concept should reflect subassemblies that can be readily fabricated using existing state-of-the art methods.
 - *The subsystem design should clearly define all the interfaces of the subassemblies. The most satisfactory interface would be one where there is a minimum impact on each assembly making up the interface.*



Example 1- Technical Criterion and Factors (JPL)- (cont.)

➤ Design Concept (*Criterion T1*) (cont.)

❖ Acceptability of Existing Hardware (*Factor*)

- *The design concept should require a minimum of new hardware development and if required, should not be difficult to develop*
- *The selection of existing hardware should show a minimum of design changes necessary to adapt the existing hardware to meet the design requirements*



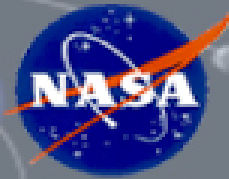
Example 1- Technical Criterion and Factors (JPL)- (cont.)

➤ Design Concept (*Criterion T1*) (cont.)

- ❖ Design Concept for the High-Power, Solid-State Amplifiers as it Relates to Generating High Peak Power (*Factor*)
 - *The design concept for the high-power, solid-state amplifiers should evidence an understanding of the problems and potential solutions for semiconductor failure due to excessive heat and vibration*



Example 2- Resources Criterion and Factors (JPL)



➤ Resources (*Criterion T2*)

- ❖ The degree to which the proposed technical personnel, facilities and equipment are available and suitable for performance of the effort set forth in the specimen contract.

Factors to be considered:

- ❖ Availability of personnel (*Factor*)

The staffing charts should show an understanding of the loading of personnel required for the program. The proposal should show that a qualified labor base is available, and the need for new hires is minimal.

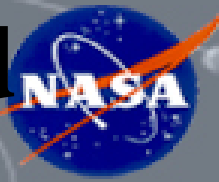


Example 2- Resources Criterion and Factors (JPL) (Cont.)

➤ Resources (*Criterion T2*) (cont.)

❖ Qualification of Personnel (*Factor*)

- *The education and related experience of the proposed technical personnel should show they are capable of performing their assigned tasks. The technical team proposed should have participated in preparing the proposal.*



Example 2- Resources Criterion and Factors (JPL) (Cont.)

➤ Resources (*Criterion T2*) (cont.)

❖ Facilities and Equipment (*Factor*)

- *Test facilities should be adequate and available for performing necessary structural and thermal development and verification tests*
- *Test facilities should include a well-equipped lab for performing accurate VSWR and insertion loss measurement at L-band frequencies*
- *Proposed facilities should meet clean room standards and have controlled access requirements IAW MIL-STD. 123*



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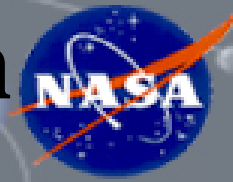
Example 3- Management Criterion and Factors (JPL)

➤ Management Plans (Criterion M1)

- ❖ The degree to which the proposed management plans are suitable for organization, implementation and control of the program.
- Factors to be considered follow:



Example 3- Management Criterion and Factors (JPL)



➤ Proposed Organization and Structure (*Factor*)

- ❖ *The proposed technical and management assignments should indicate a program management organization that is complete and well-defined. The organization should not be overly complex or too large for the effort.*
- ❖ *The program management organization should integrate well into the overall company. Effective lines of authority and communication should be evident, and the various technical and management functions should effectively interact.*



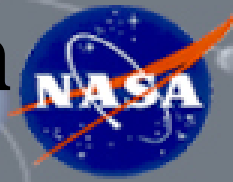
Example 3- Management Criterion and Factors (JPL)

➤ Program Manager's Authority and Responsibility (Factor)

- ❖ *The program manager's authority should be adequate to command the resources necessary for contract performance.*
- ❖ *The PM should have full responsibility for all program elements.*
- ❖ *The program manager should have ready access to upper management to resolve problems beyond the PM's authority and control.*



Example 3- Management Criterion and Factors (JPL)

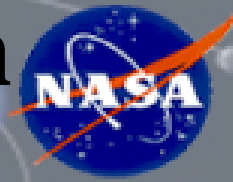


➤ Implementation Plan for Conducting the Effort (*Factor*)

- ❖ *The breakdown of the effort into its component work items, as shown by the WBS, should logically and completely identify all major tasks and sub-tasks*
- ❖ *The network schedule should show an orderly process from development to completion of the task. Milestones should be sufficient to clearly convey that information*
- ❖ *The summary network schedule should identify major milestones. In addition, the major milestones should show the proposer's capability to meet the performance and delivery schedule of the specimen contract*



Example 3- Management Criterion and Factors (JPL)



➤ Program Control Plan (*Factor*)

- ❖ *The program control plan should consist of a well-thought-out procedure for ensuring adequate visibility and control of cost, performance and schedule*
- ❖ *The system to be used for financial status and progress reporting should provide timely and accurate information. Regular review of the program by upper management should be included*



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Example 4- Cost Factor (NASA)

➤ Cost Factor

- ❖ The evaluation team will evaluate the total proposed cost of this requirement to determine the realism and validity of the proposed cost for the required effort



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Example 5- Related Experience Factor (NASA)



➤ Relevant Experience and Past Performance Factor

- ❖ This category is an evaluation of overall corporate or offeror experience, not individual or key personnel experience. Sub-factors generally consist of the following:
 - Experience in accomplishing work which is *comparable* or *related* to the effort required under this procurement.
The team will review projects presented by an offeror which reflect a comparable magnitude of effort including technical, cost, schedule and management elements or constraints similar to those expected in this requirement



Example 5- Related Experience Factor (NASA) (Cont.)

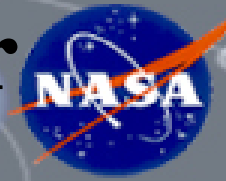
➤ Relevant Experience and Past Performance Factor (cont.)

- ❖ Past performance, or how well an offeror did on earlier work, can be a very significant indicator of how well the offeror can be expected to perform on this requirement. The team will review projects presented by an offeror and will evaluate characteristics such as resilience in the face of trouble, resourcefulness, management's determination to see that an organization lives up to certain commitments or standards, and skill in development and utilization of key personnel



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Example 6- "Other Factors" Factor (NASA)



➤ *Other Considerations* factors

- ❖ Other considerations which will be evaluated by the team include:
 - Financial condition and capability
 - Priority placed by corporate level or company owners on work proposed
 - Importance of business to offeror
 - Stability of labor-management relations
 - Extent of proposed small business/SDB/WO/VO business subcontracting
 - Use of subcontracts in HUB zones



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Proposal Preparation Period- Initial Steps



- Read and Analyze the RFP (NASA Example)
 - ❖ Section C - Description/specs/SOW
 - Identify minimum, mandatory requirements (If you don't meet, you're non-responsive)
 - Identify requirements that are difficult to satisfy or where competitors are ahead of you
 - Identify areas which offer you a competitive advantage
 - Identify any requirements that unduly restrict competition
 - ❖ Section F - Deliveries or performance
 - ❖ Verify you can meet schedule
- Section H- Special Contract Requirements (cont.)
 - ❖ Ensure you can meet
 - ❖ Include impact in cost/price proposal



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Proposal Preparation Period- Initial Steps (cont.)



- ♦ Section H- Special Contract Requirements (cont.)
 - Ensure you include their impact in your cost/price proposal
- ♦ Section J - List of attachments
 - The real technical requirements are often in these exhibits!
- ♦ Section L - Instructions, conditions, notices to offerors
 - Compare the proposal instructions to the evaluation factors
(The combination equals the rules of the competition)
 - Determine if you can submit an alternate proposal
- ♦ Section M - Evaluation factors for award
 - Understand factors, subfactors, and relative importance
 - Determine relative importance of technical/management vs. cost/price
 - Understand the overall basis for contract award



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Proposal Preparation Period- Initial Steps (cont.)



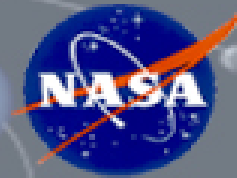
- Decide whether to bid
 - ❖ Can you successfully perform the job?
 - ❖ Consider benefit vs. business risk
 - ❖ Assess your potential competition

- Consult legal counsel immediately if proposal is unduly restrictive
 - ❖ Must file protests before due date



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Proposal Preparation Period- Initial Steps (cont.)



➤ Establish a Proposal Team

- ❖ Appoint a Proposal Lead
- ❖ Use functional specialists for evaluating factors/compliance areas

➤ Establish a Proposal Schedule

- ❖ Allow time for the following:
 - Graphics, printing, reproduction, shipment
 - Revision of cost/price proposal for technical/management changes
 - Management/legal review



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Follow-up Steps

- Improve your chances for winning
 - ❖ Obtain technical documents to enhance understanding of job
 - ❖ Use agency "libraries" set up for proposers
 - ❖ Read all on-line reference documents
 - ❖ Find out what has and has not worked in the past

- Generate a Compliance Matrix
 - ❖ List every requirement of the SOW and specs
 - ❖ Do you meet, exceed, or fail to meet each one?
 - If you don't meet, find a way to comply - or no-bid
 - If you exceed, determine whether cost of exceeding is worth it



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Follow up steps (cont.)

➤ Determine Proposal Strategy

- ❖ Identify customer's critical requirements-brainstorm possible cost-effective solutions
- ❖ Create proposal theme (why *you* should be selected)
 - "Leading experts in the country"
 - "Highest reliability"
 - "Low life cycle cost"
 - "Innovative approach solves the hazardous materials problem"
- ❖ Determine pricing strategy (target cost)



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Follow-up Steps (cont.)

➤ Determine Your Proposal Strategy (cont.)

- ❖ Compliance method: Repeat each requirement, explain how you meet it, and substantiate
- ❖ Positioning method: Differentiate your product/service from others and show the differences are valuable
- ❖ Storyboarding method: Outline a "story" with themes and selling points
- ❖ Evaluation outlining method: Detailed topical outline based on factors, subfactors and instructions

➤ CAREFULLY REVIEW THE PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS



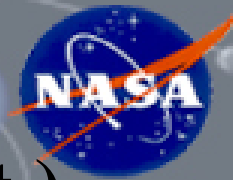
Example 1: Management Instructions (JPL)

➤ Organization Plan

- ❖ Provide an organization chart (or charts) and sufficient supplemental narrative to fully describe the following:
 - A chart of the program management organization to be used to perform the proposed effort. Identify key technical and management personnel who will be assigned.
 - A chart showing the position of the program management organization within the overall company or corporate organization



Example 1:



Management Instructions (JPL) (cont.)

➤ Organization Plan (cont.)

- ❖ The authority of the program manager to command and control the resources (e.g., personnel, finances, facilities) and subcontracts necessary for contract performance.
- ❖ The procedure to be followed by the program manager in obtaining decisions beyond the PM's authority in resolving conflicts for resources not under the PM's control.



Example 1:



Management Instructions (JPL) (cont.)

➤ Program Control Plan

- ❖ Provide a program control plan. This plan should describe the procedure to be followed for monitoring and control of cost, performance and schedule. Describe in detail the system for reporting financial status and progress, both internally and to JPL. Identify the management level responsible for reviewing the financial status and program reports and taking corrective action as appropriate.
- ❖ Include a discussion of the plan for subcontractor management. In particular, discuss the methods by which the requirements will be implemented and technical, schedule and cost monitored.



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Example 2: Related Experience and Other Factors Instruction



➤ Relevant Experience and Past Performance and Other Considerations - Volume II (NASA)

- ❖ The relevant experience and past performance and other considerations proposal should be formatted in two separate sections, one for relevant experience and past performance, and a separate one for other considerations. Volume II should parallel, to the maximum extent possible, the format of the relevant experience and past performance and other considerations criteria outlined in section M.1(B) of this solicitation. As a minimum, your proposal must include the following:



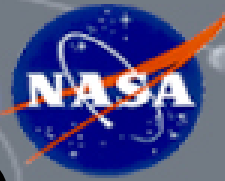
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Example 2: Related Experience and Other Factors Instruction

➤ Relevant Experience and Past Performance and Other Considerations - Volume II (NASA)

- ❖ If applicable, identify your labor management history with specifics such as dates of organization attempts and results, lost days as absolute and percentages, etc. Historic information is requested over the last three (3) years.
- ❖ Relevant experience and past performance



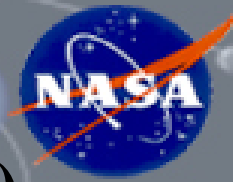
Example 2: Related Experience and Other Factors Instruction (cont.)

➤ Relevant Experience and Past Performance and Other Considerations - Volume II (NASA) (cont.)

- ❖ A statement of background experience in activities similar or related to the requirements of this solicitation.
- ❖ A list of Government contracts for similar or related work in excess of \$500,000.00 received in the last three years, or currently in negotiation. For each entry, provide the contract number, the government agency placing the contract, the type of contract, a brief description of the work, the name of the contracting officer and contracting officer's technical representative, their addresses and telephone numbers.
- ❖ Identify and explain any terminations for default or terminations for the convenience of the government



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Example 2: Related Experience and Other Factors Instruction (cont.)

➤ Relevant Experience and Past Performance and Other Considerations - Volume II (NASA) (cont.)

- ❖ If subcontractors are proposed, identify those that are small businesses, disadvantaged businesses, women-owned businesses, or located in labor surplus areas.
- ❖ Furnish your last three (3) years certified financial statements.
- ❖ If applicable, identify your labor management history with specifics such as dates of organization attempts and results, lost days as absolute and percentages, etc. Provide data for the last three (3) years



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Interface with the Customer

➤ Pre-proposal conferences

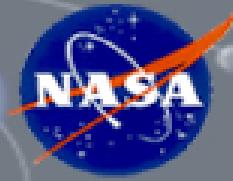
- ❖ Purpose -- Provide additional information proposers may need
- ❖ Content may include:
 - Question and Answer sessions
 - Job walk
 - Observation of on-going operations
 - Agencies overview of the project
- ❖ Attendance is essential
- ❖ **Note:** RFP takes precedence over anything presented at conference - (unless agency subsequently modifies RFP)



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Interface with the Customer

(cont.)



➤ Addenda to the RFP

- ❖ Government issues addenda to amend RFP or answer questions
- ❖ You *must* comply with modified RFP
- ❖ You *must* acknowledge receipt of each addendum on the appropriate form
- ❖ Check website frequently to ensure you received all addenda

➤ Asking questions

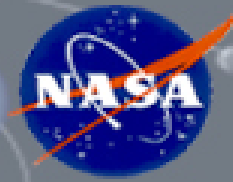
- ❖ C.O. will receive questions from proposers
- ❖ Answers will be provided to *all* sources as addendum



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Interface with the Customer

(cont.)



➤ Asking questions (cont.)

- ❖ If unsure, ask question
- ❖ Holding back can hurt you
 - You may guess wrong
 - C.O. generally can't answer after proposals received
 - Unasked questions on *defective* specs may render you responsible during contract performance
 - Unasked questions on *restrictive* specs may cause you to lose a bid protest
- ❖ Don't ask anyone besides the C.O./negotiator
 - Answers aren't binding; only the RFP is
 - Answers may lead you down the wrong path



Preparing the Proposal



➤ What is a proposal?

- ❖ *A legal offer* - If accepted, you're legally bound to perform
- ❖ *A sales document* - Demonstrates your company:
 - Meet requirements
 - Has best approach/value

➤ Format proposal to match Proposal Instructions

- ❖ Include Table of Contents
- ❖ Put material in specified volume/section
- ❖ Comply with page limitation
- ❖ Ensure compliance matrices cross-reference the WBS, specs, etc.



Preparing the Proposal (cont.)

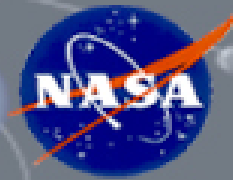
- Format proposal to match Proposal Instructions
 - ❖ Execute all required representations and certifications (or you may be non-responsive)
 - ❖ Consider an executive summary
 - ❖ Respond to *every* instruction and requirement
- Minimize Exceptions
- Be *consistent* (Technical/Management/Cost)
- Be *credible* - Support your positions
- Use "Red Team" to review proposal
- Submit your best proposal *now* - Don't wait for Discussions



How to Lose the Competition (Partial List)



- Fail to understand what *Customer* wants
- Misinterpret requirements
- Take exception/fail to comply with requirements
- Fail to provide all requested information
- Fail to substantiate your statements
- Put data where evaluators can't find it
- Unrealistic schedules, pricing, or technological advances
- Deliver proposal late!



Initial Evaluation of Proposals- How Does the Agency Evaluate?

- By using only factors listed in RFP
 - ❖ Changes in factors require RFP addendum and time to respond
- By using only *permissible* information
 - ❖ Primarily relying on proposals
 - ❖ Obtaining reports from consultants, pre-award surveys, field pricing audits
 - ❖ Other data only if stated in RFP (e.g., reference checks, testing)
 - ❖ Government can't go beyond this to ensure you're capable
 - ❖ Government can't ignore deficiencies in proposal by referring to outside data
- Your proposal *must* provide all requested data



Who Performs the Evaluations?

- Methods vary
 - ◆ *Committees* may evaluate different areas (e.g., Past Performance Assessment Committee)
 - ◆ Entire committee may not read every proposal
 - ◆ Divide proposals among evaluators
 - ◆ BAFOs may be reviewed by different evaluators
- Determine how agency will perform evaluation
 - ◆ NASA SEB
 - ◆ DOD 4-Step
 - ◆ NASA SBIR
 - ◆ Technology Announcements and Down-Select



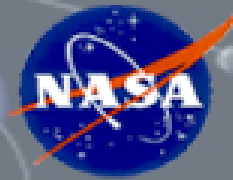
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Proposal Evaluation

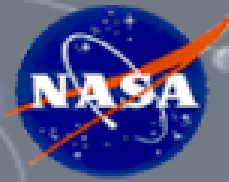
- What do evaluators do?
 - ❖ Review RFP requirements
 - ❖ Analyze company's approach vs. requirements
 - ❖ Generate strengths, weaknesses and questions against each factor
 - ❖ Consensus, as appropriate
 - ❖ Apply rating system to data
 - ❖ Conduct Cost/Price Evaluation
 - Cost-reimbursement -evaluate cost realism
 - (agency generates "probable cost" after discussions)
 - ❖ Generate cost questions for discussions
- Evaluation Procedure strictly followed

Proposal Evaluations- Specific Techniques



➤ Example 1 - Technical Evaluation

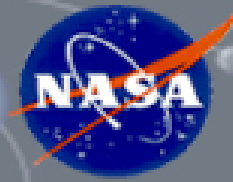
- ❖ Sub-factor includes: "Evaluate the offeror's capability and methodology for deriving detailed design requirements and solutions to technical problems based on the SOW. . . ."
- ❖ Instructions include: "A narrative should elaborate on the technical comprehension of the diverse performance requirements, their implications and interrelationships, identification of subordinate requirements and methodologies"



Proposal Evaluations- Specific Techniques (cont.)

➤ Scoring Scheme:

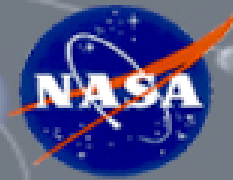
- ❖ Red = Unacceptable
- ❖ Yellow = Marginal
- ❖ Green = Acceptable
- ❖ Blue = Exceptional



Proposal Evaluations- Specific Techniques (cont.)

- Company A : “We have proven our substantial systems engineering capabilities on the X and Y contracts. We will make full use of system engineering techniques to meet all of the agency's requirements.”
- Company B: “Figure 1 is a compliance matrix indicating our compliance with all of the performance requirements. Figure 2 indicates the derived subordinate requirements.”
- Company C: “Figure 1 is supplemented by the following narrative, demonstrating which performance requirements are difficult to achieve. Engineering analysis is provided to show how we will accomplish the requirements. Figure 2 shows similar data in derived requirements (by analysis) down to the assembly (piece-part) level.”

Proposal Evaluations- Specific Techniques



- Example 2 – Management Evaluation (JPL)
- Sub-factor: Program Control Plan
 - ❖ Instructions: “Discuss the plan for subcontractor management
Discuss the methods by which the requirements will be implemented and technical, schedule and cost monitored.”
- ❖ Scoring Scheme
 - ❖ Superior = Thoroughly comprehensive
 - ❖ Very good = High level of expertise
 - ❖ Acceptable = Room for improvement
 - ❖ Poor = Needs extensive additional info.
 - ❖ Unacceptable = Serious unfixable weaknesses



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Proposal Evaluations- Specific Techniques (cont.)

- ❖ Company A: "We'll perform a make-or-buy decision on 12 items. Depending on whom we subcontract to, we'll decide which of our 27 monitoring tools will be applied. We always do this well."
- ❖ Company B: "Our subcontractors will be identified within 60 days. For cost-type subcontracts, we will request NASA 533 data, a monthly progress report, and a quarterly status review at the subcontractor's facility."
- ❖ Company C: "Figure 1 lists our subs. Section 1 explains why each was selected. Section 2 includes schedules for the 7 major subs. The other 3 provide summary GANTT charts, which are included. Each company reports against these by weekly e-mail. . . for the non-fixed price subcontracts, we receive NASA 533 data monthly . . . etc."



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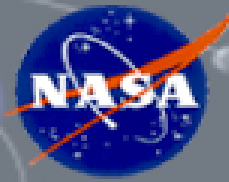
Proposal Evaluations- Specific Techniques (cont.)

➤ Example 3 - Related experience evaluation

- ❖ Factor includes: "Experience in the accomplishment of work which is *comparable or related* to this effort."
- ❖ Instructions include: "A list of Government contracts for similar or related work in excess of \$500K in the last 3 years."
- ❖ Scoring scheme: Go/No-Go

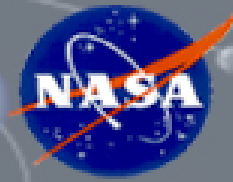


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Proposal Evaluations- Specific Techniques (cont.)

- Example 3 - Related experience evaluation (cont.)
 - ❖ Company A: No-bid the RFP because it didn't have any such Government contracts.
 - ❖ Company B: "We have no Government contracts as specified. Our directly relevant experience comes from 3 Government subcontracts and 2 major commercial jobs, which are described in the following section."
 - ❖ Company C: Immediately after receiving the RFP, it sent a question to the C.O. asking if Government subcontract and commercial contract data could be used to demonstrate adequate related experience. (Addendum to RFP revised instructions to permit this.)



Proposal Evaluations- Specific Techniques (cont.)

➤ Cost/Price Evaluation

- ❖ Review (old) SF 1411 & cost or pricing data
- ❖ Obtain field support audit, if required (e.g., DCAA)
- ❖ Review individual elements of cost and proposed profit/fee
- ❖ Fixed price - Determine proposer's capability and understanding of job (no adjustment by agency)
- ❖ Cost-reimbursement - Determine the above and evaluate realism of proposed cost
 - (Agency will generate "probable cost" after discussions)
- ❖ May or may not be scored
- ❖ Generate cost questions for discussions

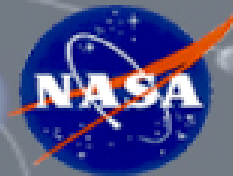


Award on Initial Proposals

- Submit a proposal that's competitive, yet one with which you can live
- *Read your RFP:* Agency can't award without discussions *unless* RFP permits.
- Trend towards making award without discussions if:
 - ❖ Acceptance "as is" represents lowest overall cost
 - ❖ Technically acceptable
- Rarely done for cost contracts (discussions required)



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Competitive Range Determination

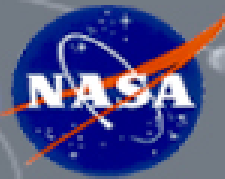
- Unless award made on initial proposals, Govt. *must* conduct discussions with all proposers in "competitive range" (CR)
- CR = Those most highly rated proposers
 - ❖ Not predetermined number or score
 - ❖ Not those who are "acceptable" or higher
- If you don't make CR, you've lost
- Decision depends on all facts - cost/price and RFP factors
- Rules have changed-elimination now more probable



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Competitive Range Determination

(cont.)



- *Old Rule:* If any doubt, include in CR
- *New Rule:* Smaller CRs (NASA-desires three max)
- If proposer doesn't meet mandatory requirement, (and isn't expected to after discussions) drop from CR
- Your proposal as submitted must be your best
 - ❖ Otherwise, you may be out of the competition



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Discussions



➤ Why conduct oral discussions?

- ❖ Verify/revise strengths and weaknesses
- ❖ Assess basis of estimate for proposed cost/price
- ❖ Assess proposed personnel face-to-face
- ❖ Verify adequacy of facilities and equipment
- ❖ Government only - allow opportunity to cure deficiencies
- ❖ Address questions that may impact source selection

➤ Written discussions

- ❖ Respond to written questions by deadline
- ❖ Provides opportunity to submit proposal revisions for more complex issues



Government Do's and Don'ts

➤ Agency must:

- ❖ Attempt to resolve *uncertainties*
- ❖ Point out suspected *mistakes*
- ❖ Disclose *deficiencies* (e.g., failure to meet minimum requirements)

➤ Agency *prohibited* from:

- ❖ Technical *transfusion* (giving your ideas to competitors)
- ❖ Technical *leveling* (telling proposer how to fix deficiencies)
- ❖ *Auctioning* (giving proposers price to be met)



Proposer “Do’s” and “Don’ts”

➤ Be Prepared

- ❖ After submitting proposal, look for areas of improvement
- ❖ Prepare written answers to advance questions
- ❖ Know your proposal thoroughly

➤ Conduct Yourself Professionally

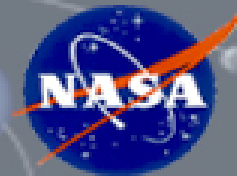
- ❖ Don't run down competitors
- ❖ Answer questions without hyperbole

➤ Know the Ground Rules

- ❖ Agenda
- ❖ Time available for responses
- ❖ Methodology

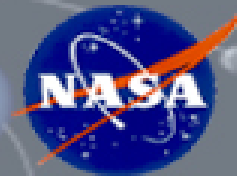


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Proposer “Do’s” and “Don’ts”

- Answer the questions - Don't conduct a Design Review
- Explain planned changes
- Track and complete action items
- Decode *why* a question is being asked
- Examples: Questions for discussions
 - ❖ "Your proposal is deficient in that you didn't describe who performs system engineering." (Leading)
 - ❖ "Provide a demonstration of your automated tool for requirements tracking."
 - ❖ “Describe for us how performance requirements are handled.”
 - ❖ “Provide your rationale for not providing electric field analyses”
 - ❖ “Discuss in detail the technical, schedule and cost impacts of implementing a breadboard to validate the intended design changes in the HVPS”



Proposer Do's and Don'ts (cont.)

- ❖ Why don't you put an engineer in residence at subcontractor D?"
(Not allowed)
- ❖ "Please explain the cost and schedule overrun problems you experienced on program z."
- ❖ Discuss your company's benefits package
- ❖ Discuss your company's cost accounting system
- ❖ Discuss your travel policy and process to receive airline tickets and travel advances
- ❖ Discuss your proposed bonus plan
- ❖ Discuss your timekeeping practices
- ❖ Discuss your personnel turnover and retention plan
- ❖ Provide a detailed breakdown of your overhead and G&A pools, to include: vacations, sick leave, holidays and how they relate to the pools



Importance of Oral Discussions

- Agency will get a better assessment of your knowledge and capabilities
- How you do in orals can be a good indicator of how well you will perform on the job



Best and Final Offers (BAFOs)



- C.O. issues request for BAFOs, including due date
- Agency may limit what you can do
- DoD Policy is as follows:
 - ❖ Proposal changes must be fully substantiated, with traceability
 - ❖ No lump sum cost/price reductions w/o justification
- BAFOs losing favor - multiple BAFOs rare
- NOTE: BAFO is a legal offer that Agency can accept as is



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Final Evaluations- The Process



- Review/Revise Initial Strengths and Weaknesses
- Determine which Deficiencies, if Any, Remain (or Are New in the BAFO!)
- Present Proposed Price or Probable Cost
- Provide Final Assessment to Source Selection Official



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Final Evaluations- The Aftermath



- Get a Debriefing
- If the Agency violated the Source Selection process, file a protest



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Final Evaluations- Conclusions

- The Government Wants a Large Pool of Qualified SB/SDB/WOB/Veteran Proposers
- Follow These Tips to be a Strong Contender
- Opportunities Exist where You Can Win- Seek them out!
- FINAL